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Kammalans
Kolla-kurups

and boys had preference over girls in this matter, but the latter could inherit if there were no male heirs.

The plot of land upon which the house was built was leased to the family as a sort of *kudiyiruppu*. It cannot be called a fully orthodox one, since Krishnan said that he had paid fifty rupees to the former resident, a coolie of the Ertachan caste (low caste Nayar), twenty three years ago when he took over from him, and another fifty rupees to the *janmi*, a Nambudri Brahmin called Manjalata Nambudri. Since then, rent had been fixed at eight annas and six pies a year, but he had not paid it for the last two years, he said, because nobody had asked him to do so! He made his living all right as a brazier, although it was not a very lucrative profession.

Having been to polyandrous families of the four sub-castes of the Kammalans, I next went on to investigate the polyandry of their associated artisan sub-castes, of which six were reliably reported to practise it. I began with the *Kolla-kurups* or shampooers, masseurs and leather shield makers. To these are assimilated also the *Vil-kurups* or bow makers, but I did not have the opportunity to see any. There are a subdivision of the main sub-caste, on the basis of speciality, as the *Puri-asari* are of the regular *Asari*.

On the 20th of November, 1949, I went to the house of a *Kolla-kurup* near Palappuram. This town is on the main Shoranur-Palghat road, east of Ottappalam, just before reaching the cross-roads of Lakkidi. We left the car on the highway, and proceeded on foot to the south of it, along a narrow, winding path which took us past luscious, green paddy fields lined with coconut trees, to a largish house, built of clay and laterite but thatched in the usual way, standing on an elevated piece of ground, like a platform. There was a gate to pass through, and as we went in we saw members of the family sitting about on a kind of rough, dried-clay verandah running round the walls of the building.

There were quite a lot of them, and they were all very gay and noisy. They started singing at the sight of us, and, laughing and shouting, made a considerable fuss of us. The contrast to the rather dismal atmosphere of the other houses that we had visited was very marked. After my guides and interpreters had somewhat quietened the children, we managed to speak to a man called Shankaran, aged thirty six, who was the eldest living male member of the family's second generation. With him were his wife and children, as well as his twenty five year old sister, Kalyany. None of the people wore anything from the waist upwards, and only a piece of cotton cloth covered the lower part of their bodies.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 206]

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Holla-kurups
Tol-kollans
Kanisans

any rent for it, but on the contrary, received payment as shampooers and masseurs of their landlord. Fees for those services were, on an average, twelve annas per session, and they received the money at regular intervals from seven to fourteen or twenty one days. Four times a year (every "season"), they were also entitled to two bags of rice, food, oil for massage and a bath(?). (I am not quite clear as to what the latter item stands for, but this is what I have in my notes.)

On the 26th of November, 1949, I visited a *Tol-kollan* household, at Meitenadesam, near Ottappalam. The name of this sub-caste means literally "skin-workers", and its members are leather-workers and cobblers. The house in which this family lived was the most miserable of all those we had or were still to see. It stood in the coconut groves on the outskirts of Ottappalam, and we went there on foot. It was a broken down construction of woven palm leaves and mud walls and the thatch on the roof was in bad condition. An old lady called Kurumba (see Fig. 14), sat just outside the front door, bare breasted and with enlarged holes in the lobes of her ears so that she could accomodate the sizeable gold lumps which are inserted here in Malayalam fashion. With her was her elderly daughter, Kunji, who received us. She was very polite and insisted on offering us some fresh coconut milk.

When we asked her about polyandry, she scoffed at the idea and said that in her family at least, the practice had been given up already in the generation of her father and mother. The men quarrelled too much about the common wife, she said, and besides, the women resented it and did not want it any more. There were members of her sub-caste who were still polyandrous, but as they were few and far between it would not be easy to locate them.

Under the circumstances, it seemed useless to make out a genealogy of these people, and I did not have time to look for a polyandrous *Tol-kollan* family elsewhere.

From this house, in the evening of the same day and with the same interpreters and guides, I went on to the home of some *Kanisans* or astrologers, who are also known as *Panikkars* locally. Theirs was a better dwelling, standing hidden in a thick grove of plantains and coconut trees well shaded and pleasant. We were received by a man called Ramankuti, thirty five years old, who offered us some chairs to sit on and very readily answered our questions.

He told us that his household bore the name of Pellarmangalam, and that his *kalarikel* was similarly called. It appeared that *Kanisans* do not have *tarawads* either, and that their patrilineal clans are called "gymna-